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Federal Communications Commission

Re; Media Ownership Policy Re-examination

· The FCC should not remove the current rules restricting media concentration.
· The FCC should put off the June 2, 2003 decisions on deregulation, and instead, actively solicit more public and congressional input into the decision making process.
· The FCC's goals in Media Ownership Policy Re-examination state the intention to promote "competition", "diversity", and "localism", in today's media market. Let's examine these goals;

Re: "Competition"

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 was intended to foster competition, yet it led to a wave of mergers and increased monopolies, for example;
· The nation's 7 largest cable operators now control over 75% of the market.
· Clear Channel alone grew from 40 to 1,240 stations – 11% of the market.
· Ten large parent companies control about 2/3rds of both radio listeners and radio revenues.

"Diversity"

· Although cable consumers typically receive about 60 channels, their "choices" are determined by a handful of corporate giants.
· Of 1,800 newspapers, 11,000 magazines, 11,000 radio stations, and 2,000 TV stations in North America, the number of companies owning a controlling interest has shrunk to 10.

"Localism"

· The effect of media conglomeration has been to strangle out small, local, media venues, and to reduce coverage of local news. Coverage of electoral campaigns has plummeted, as well. The public has become more disaffected and voter participation has sharply decreased. Businessmen decide what is newsworthy, and the public interest is not served. Since we, the public, own the airways, we are being exploited by the tandem of corporate conglomerates and the lobbyist-fed government. This must stop.